

Message Text

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FOL REPEAT CAIRO 1527 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1527

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP

SUBJECT: CODELS IPU AND SOLARZ MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT SADAT

SUMMARY: IN LONG MEETING WITH PRESIDENT, CODELS
IPU AND SOLARZ WERE GIVEN SADAT'S STANDARD VIEWS ON
CURRENT ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM, SUEZ CANAL OPENING,
PALESTINIANS, ARMS AND EGYPTIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS. SADAT
ALSO DISCUSSED STATUS OF EGYPTIAN WOMEN. IN RESPONSE
CODEL SOLARZ' REQUEST HE PROMISED TO DO WHAT HE CAN
TO FACILITATE EMIGRATION OF SOME 30 SYRIAN JEWS TO JOIN
FAMILIES IN NEW YORK, BUT NOTED A SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY
THE SECRETARY TO INDUCE THE ISRAELIS ALSO TO WITHDRAW IN
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THE GOLAN IS LIKELY TO BE A DETERMINING FACTOR IN SYRIAN

DECISION. END SUMMARY

1. SEVEN MEMBER CODEL IPU MET WITH PRESIDENT SADAT FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF ON FEB 9. CODEL SOLARZ ALSO PARTICIPATED. IN ADDITION, WIVES OF CODEL MEMBERS WERE INVITED ATTEND. AFTER AMBASSADOR INTRODUCED GROUP, SESSION EVOLVED AS A QUESTION AND ANSWER MEETING. HIGHLIGHTS OF SADAT'S REPLIES ARE SUMMARIEZED BELOW:

2. ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION: PRESENT SITUATION ME HIGHLY DANGEROUS. IT IS A TIME BOMB WHICH NEEDS BE DEFUSED. FOLLOWING LAST YEAR'S DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS, OPPOSING MILITARY FORCES ARE FACING EACH OTHER, ESPECIALLY IN GOLAN FRONT. ISRAELIS SHOULD WITHDRAW ON ALL THREE FRONTS AS A GESTURE OF PEACE. THEREAFTER PARTIES CAN GO TO GENEVA TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF PEACE AND WHAT COMES AFTERWARD. HE WAS NOT ASKING THAT ISRAEL GO BACK TO THE '67 BORDERS NOW. BUT IS SHOULD WITHDRAW, INCLUDING IN GOLAN. PROBLEM PARTICULARLY COMPLICATED THERE BECAUSE OF SMALLNESS OF AREA.

3. REPLYING TO SEVERAL QUERIES AS TO WHAT EGYPT WILL GIVE FOR FURTHER TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL, PRESIDENT PROFESSED INABILITY GIVE ANYTHING. NOTING ISRAELIS ARE ON EGYPTIAN LAND, HE ASSERTED THAT IF ISRAELIS ASK FOR CONCESSIONS FOR EVERY 50 KILOMETER WITHDRAWAL, HE WILL SOON HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE. AT SUCH TIME AS WITHDRAWAL TO '67 LINES TAKES PLACE ALL PARTIES CAN TALK ABOUT CONCESSIONS. WHEN ASKED FOR SPECIFICS OF EGYPTIAN TERRITORIAL DEMANDS, SADAT FIRST REPLIED THIS IS NEGOTIABLE. SUBSEQUENTLY, IN ANSWER TO FOLLOW-UP QUESTION, HE CONFIRMED EGYPT WANTS THE PASSES AND ABU RUDAYS OIL FIELDS. SADAT SUGGESTED ISRAEL SHOULD TAKE HIS DEEDS AS AN INDICATION OF HIS GOOD INTENTIONS AND DESIRE FOR PEACE. FOR EXAMPLE, HE IS SUBSTANTIALLY REBUILDING SUEZ CANAL CITIES AND ONE MILLION PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN RESETTLED THERE. ALL ARE UNDER ISRAELI GUNS. HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF POUNDS HAVE BEEN INVESTED IN THESE RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. PRESIDENT AFFIRMED GOE HAS NO INTENTION OF ATTACKING ISRAEL. NOR, IN HIS VIEW, DOES SYRIA.

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4. ASKED BY CODEL SOLARZ ABOUT DURATION OF ANY NEW AGREEMENT, THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED HE UNABLE GIVE ISRAEL "THREE YEARS". TO DO SO WOULD MEAN HE IS APPROVING ISRAELI PRESENCE ON EGYPTIAN LAND FOR THIS PERIOD OF TIME. BUT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO US ON THIS MATTER. ISRAELIS DO NOT TRUST HIM AND HE DOES NOT TRUST THEM. YET BOTH SIDES HAVE CONFIDENCE IN US. THUS, US CAN PLAY KEY

ROLE. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE SECRETARY'S STEP-BY-STEP EFFORT WILL SUCCEED.

5. PALESTINIANS: STRESSING THE PALESTINIANS ARE THE "CORE OF THE PROBLEM", THE PRESIDENT ARGUED THAT USG SHOULD RECOGNIZE THEM. CODEL SOLARZ NOTED HIS IMPRESSION THAT ALL ISRAELIS, REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL PERSUASION, OPPOSE RECOGNITION OF PLO. SADAT RESPONDED THAT WITHOUT PALESTINIANS, THERE CAN BE NO SETTLEMENT. REPLYING CODEL SOLARZ'S SUGGESTION ISRAEL MIGHT BE WILLING TO RETURN PARTS OF THE WEST BANK TO KING HUSSEIN, BUT NOT TO THE PLO, THE PRESIDENT SUGGESTED ISRAEL SHOULD PUBLICLY SAY SO. THEREAFTER THE ARABS CAN GET TOGETHER AND DETERMINE HOW THE ISSUE SHOULD BE HANDLED.

6. SUEZ CANAL: ASKED WHETHER ISRAELI SHIPS MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO PASS THROUGH THE CANAL AS RESULT NEW DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, SADAT CLAIMED INABILITY TO DO SO. ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, CONSTANTINOPLE CONVENTION OF 1888 VESTS EGYPT WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTION CANAL AND PROHIBITS COUNTRIES IN THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY WITH EGYPT FROM TRANSITING. SINCE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY STILL EXISTS WITH ISRAEL, ITS VESSELS CANNOT TRANSIT. ONCE OVERALL PROBLEM WORKED OUT, SOMETHING MIGHT BE DONE ABOUT CANAL TRANSIT. THOUGH DESIRING A STATE OF NON-BELLIGERENCY WITH ISRAEL, EGYPT CANNOT DO SO ALONE. TRANSIT OF ISARELI CARGOES THROUGH CANAL ON THIRD COUNTRY SITE IS "NEGOTIABLE".

7. US NAVY HELP: THE PRESIDENT THANKED CODEL FOR US NAVY ASSISTANCE IN CLEARING THE SUEZ CANAL, BUT INDICATED THERE ARE STILL SOME THINGS TO BE DONE BEFORE IT CAN BE REOPENED TO NAVIGATION.

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8. ARMS: ANSWERING SENATOR METCALIF'S QUERY HOW HE WOULD FEEL IF CONGRESS ENACTED A PROHIBITION TO EXPORT ARMS TO THE MIDDLE EAST AREA, SADAT EXPRESSED HIS APPROVAL. FOLLOW UP QUESTION BY SENATOR METCALIF WHETHER SUCH A RESOLUTION WOULD BE TO EGYPT'S OR TO ISRAEL'S ADVANTAGE, THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED OBLIQUELY BY SAYING IT MIGHT MAKE ISRAELIS MORE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE.

9. RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS: PRESIDENT RELATED THAT SINCE HIE EXPULSION OF THE SOVIET ADVISORS, EGYPTIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE BEEN STRAINED. FOLLOWING VLADIVOSTOK, TWO DISTINCT APPROACHES TO PEACE MAKING HAD EVOLVED. ONE IS THE US SUPPORTED STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH; THE OTHER IS HANDLING EVERYTHING IN GENEVA. GROMYKO, DURING HIS RECENT VISIT, REITERATED SOVIET BELIEF THAT GENEVA

IS PROPER FORUM. SADAT SAID HE DEMURRED. HE HAD TOLD GROMYKO GOE WISHES GIVE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH EVERY OPPORTUNITY. OF, OF COURSE, ISRAEL WANTS TO DO SO, ALL PARTIES CAN GO TO GENEVA AND NEGOTIATE EVERYTHING. HIS POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIETS REMAIN CONSIDERABLE. GROMYKO'S VISIT HELPED SOME, BUT MOST OF THESE PROBLEMS REMAIN UNRESOLVED AND AWAIT BREZHNEV'S ARRIVAL.

11. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR: ADVERTING TO PRESENT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR, CONGRESSMAN MCCLORY ASKED IF GOE PLANS ANYTHING TO UPGRADE THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN. PRESIDENT RESPONDED THAT MADAME SADAT IS CONSTANTLY PRESSING HIM ON THIS MATTER. CLAIMING EGYPTIAN WOMEN ENJOY MANY ADVANTAGES OVER THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS, HE NOTED THEY RECEIVE EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND MAY BE FOUND IN ALL PROFESSIONS. SADAT ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME (UNSPECIFIED) INEQUITIES REMAIN. HE HOPED TO REMEDY THESE IN THE COMING YEAR.

SYRAIN JEWS: NOTING HIS CONSTITUENCY INCLUDES SIZEABLE NUMBER OF SYRIAN JEWS, MANY OF WHOM ARE STILL ATTACHED TO SYRIA, CODEL SOLARZ ADVERTED TO SAD PLIGHT OF JEWISH COMMUNITY IN SYRIA. ON PURELY HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, HE SOUGHT PRESIDENT'S INTERVENTION WITH SYRIAN AUTHORITIES TO PERMIT SOME 30 ELDERLY AND INFIRM RELATIVES OF HIS

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CONSTITUENTS TO MIGRATE AND JOIN THEIR FAMILIES. SADAT RESPONDED HE UNABLE TO SPEAK FOR ASAD, BUT OPINED PROBLEM BEST SOLVED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER. IF SOME WITHDRAWAL CAN BE ACHIEVED IN GOLAN, ATMOSPHERE WILL BE IMPROVED. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES ASAD WOULD, IN HIS JUDGMENT, LOOK SYMPATHETICALLY AT REQUEST. SADAT PROMISED TO DO WHAT HE CAN, BUT EMPHASIZED POLITICAL CLIMATE IS LIKELY TO BE A DETERMINING FACTOR.

13. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS RELAXED AND CORDIAL THROUGHOUT. VARIOUS COMMENTS MADE SUBSEQUENTLY BY VARIOUS CODEL MEMBERS INDICATED MOST WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S SINCERITY AND CANDOR.

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